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Security Council

Sixty-third year

Provisional

6026th meeting

Tuesday, 2 December 2008, 11.25 a.m.
New York

President:	Mr. Jurica	(Croatia)
Members:	Belgium	Mr. Grauls
	Burkina Faso	Mr. Kafando
	China	Mr. Zhang Yesui
	Costa Rica	Mr. Urbina
	France	Mr. Ripert
	Indonesia	Mr. Natalegawa
	Italy	Mr. Mantovani
	Libyan Arab Jamahiriya	Mr. Ettalhi
	Panama	Mr. Suescum
	Russian Federation	Mr. Churkin
	South Africa	Ms. Qwabe
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Ms. Velamati
	United States of America	Mr. Wolff
	Viet Nam	Mr. Hoang Chi Trung

Agenda

The situation in Somalia

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08-62880 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 11.25 a.m.

Expression of thanks to the retiring President

The President: As this is the first meeting of the Security Council for the month of December 2008, I should like to take this opportunity to pay tribute, on behalf of the Council, to His Excellency Mr. Jorge Urbina, Permanent Representative of Costa Rica to the United Nations, for his service as President of the Security Council for the month of November 2008. I am sure I speak for all members of the Security Council in expressing deep appreciation to Ambassador Urbina to the great diplomatic skill with which he conducted the Council's business last month.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in Somalia

The President: I should like to inform the Council that I have received letters from the representatives of Australia, Canada, Denmark, Greece, Japan, Malaysia, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, the Republic of Korea, Singapore, Somalia, Spain and Ukraine, in which they request to be invited to participate in the consideration of the item on the Council's agenda. In accordance with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite those representatives to participate in the consideration of the item, without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Duale (Somalia) took a seat at the Council table; the representatives of the other aforementioned countries took the seats reserved for them at the side of the Council Chamber.

The President: The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

Members of the Council have before them document S/2008/748, which contains the text of a draft resolution submitted by Australia, Belgium, Canada, Croatia, Denmark, France, Greece, Italy, Japan, Malaysia, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, the Republic of Korea, Singapore, Spain, Ukraine, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America.

Members of the Council also have before them the report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Somalia, document S/2008/709.

It is my understanding that the Council is ready to proceed to the vote on the draft resolution before it. Unless I hear any objection, I shall put the draft resolution to the vote now.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

A vote was taken by show of hands.

In favour:

Belgium, Burkina Faso, China, Costa Rica, Croatia, France, Indonesia, Italy, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Panama, Russian Federation, South Africa, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Viet Nam

The President: There were 15 votes in favour. The draft resolution has been adopted unanimously as resolution 1846 (2008).

I shall now give the floor to those members of the Council who wish to make statements following the voting.

Mr. Zhang Yesui (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): China voted in favour of the resolution just adopted on piracy off the Somali coast. I wish to take this opportunity to make a few points.

Piracy off the coast of Somalia is running rampant and poses a direct threat to international humanitarian assistance and the security of international navigation. It also poses a potential threat to the world economy. In the long run, it will harm Somalia and its people as well.

The international community needs to work together to solve the problem. The Security Council bears primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security and is therefore duty-bound to play a leading role on this issue.

That is why this year the Security Council adopted resolutions 1816 (2008) and 1838 (2008) in close succession, authorizing national warships to enter the waters off the Somali coast to fight piracy. The

resolution just adopted lays the foundation for the establishment of a platform for international judicial cooperation in the fight against piracy.

Combating piracy is a new challenge facing the international community. As it has an impact on the fundamental interests of Member States, it is obvious that the United Nations should play a leadership and coordinating role.

As a victim of piracy off the coast of Somalia, China vigorously supports and is ready to participate in the international anti-piracy endeavours coordinated by the United Nations. Nevertheless, China believes that the piracy issue is only a symptom of Somalia's deep-seated political and social crisis. The issue cannot be fundamentally resolved if the domestic crisis in Somalia is not effectively addressed. While focusing on piracy, the international community should not lose sight of the root causes of the worsening piracy issue. Only by starting the Somali reconciliation process will it be possible to resolve the disputes among various factions in the country, encourage the Somali people to form a national consensus, promote economic development and ensure that the people are content and live in happiness. Otherwise, the security situation in Somalia will not stabilize and there will not be a lasting solution to the Somali issue, which has plagued the international community for nearly 20 years.

The worsening humanitarian crisis in Somalia has already evolved into one of the most serious humanitarian crises in Africa.

China appreciates the important role played by the African Union Mission in Somalia in addressing the security situation in Somalia and calls on the international community to provide real support to the Mission. China has provided its assistance to the African Union for its peacekeeping operations in Somalia and will continue to give positive consideration to similar requests for assistance in the future.

China maintains that the United Nations should be more actively engaged in the Somali issue. We call upon the Security Council to heed the strong appeal of the Somali Government and the African Union and support the early deployment of United Nations peacekeeping troops in Somalia to take over the African Union peacekeeping mission there. We also urge the various factions in Somalia to create favourable political conditions in the country for the early deployment of the United Nations peacekeeping forces.

We are convinced that the Somali people long for peace and that the various factions in the country will one day overcome their political disputes, conform to the aspirations of the people and reach political arrangements that will put Somalia back on the track towards peace and stabilization. The international community should also be fully confident in this and work with the Somali people towards this goal.

Mr. Natalegawa (Indonesia): My delegation voted in favour of resolution 1846 (2008) on the basis of a number of considerations, and we would like to put them on record.

The security situation off the coast of Somalia has deteriorated markedly due to acts of piracy and armed robbery at sea. These acts have become more blatant and impose greater costs on the international community, in particular the transportation of humanitarian assistance into Somalia and the security of international navigation in the area. They have also had an adverse impact on the social and economic lives of the affected countries. We condemn and deplore all acts of piracy and armed robbery against vessels in the waters off the coast of Somalia. We would also like to extend our strong support to the flag States and others who have already fallen prey to such illegal acts.

We fully support concerted measures to assist Somalia in fighting such acts. Let there be no doubt of the importance of enhancing cooperation and, not least, coordination among States in curbing such acts. Resolution 1816 (2008) and subsequent resolutions, including the one that we have just adopted, provides a strong legal foundation for States to meet this objective.

We remain convinced, however, that the root cause of the piracy threat is the situation in Somalia itself, which is due to political conflict, lawlessness and lack of capacity for law enforcement. While the international community needs to address the scourge of piracy off the coast of Somalia, it is ultimately on the ground that the international community needs to translate its words into deeds. This includes greater support for the African Union Mission to Somalia (AMISOM) and the political process in the short term, and the mustering of international military resources in the medium to long term.

Finally, our support for the resolution is based on the fact that it seeks to help Somalia, is focused on Somalia and spells out clearly that its provisions shall not affect the rights, obligations or responsibilities of Member States under international law, including under

the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea and shall not be considered as establishing customary international law.

Mr. Churkin (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): The Russian Federation is extremely concerned about the increasing number of incidents of piracy and robbery at sea in the area of Somalia and the seas around it. We cannot ignore the fact that the pirates are making use of increasingly sophisticated methods in their criminal activity and that their goals are ever-expanding.

Given the extent of these crimes against ships in the Gulf of Aden, the Russian navy has become actively involved in combating piracy in the region. At the present time, the Russian ship Neustrashimy is right now engaged in operational observation off the coast of Somalia in collaboration with naval vessels of other States cooperating with the Government of Somalia. We have already rebuffed several pirate attacks. We are studying the possibility of sending additional forces of the Russian navy to the region.

The resolution adopted today contains a number of new and important elements. In particular, measures to combat pirates off the coast of Somalia are now clearly included in the context of joint efforts to re-establish peace and law and order in that country. The resolution welcomes the initiatives of States, includes the Russian Federation, and of international organizations to curb this scourge. An important role must be played by the measures outlined in the resolution to strengthen the ability of marine shippers, in cooperation with the International Maritime Organization, to use their own potential to ward off pirate attacks.

We are convinced that, for an effective implementation of the anti-piracy measures approved by the Security Council, there is a need for agreed and properly coordinated action by States. Here, the resolution also represents a step forward, since it is aimed at the study of ways to improve the coordinating role of the United Nations. Enhanced attention must also be paid to such complex issues as those connected with the detention of individuals involved in piracy and robbery on the seas and the appropriate jurisdiction for bringing such individuals to justice. We believe that this will promote the implementation by States of the mechanisms provided for in the Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts against the Safety of Maritime Navigation of 1988, as provided for by the resolution.

Once again, I would like to note that, in discussing the problem of piracy off the shores of Somalia, we all understand, of course, that a long-term solution to this problem will only be found through a comprehensive political settlement in this country, with the cooperation of the United Nations and the African Union.

Mr. Mantovani (Italy): I would like to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council and to express our warmest appreciation to Ambassador Urbina of Costa Rica and his team for the excellent work done during their presidency last month.

I would like to join other members in welcoming today's adoption of resolution 1846 (2008), which renews and improves resolution 1816 (2008) and makes our collective fight against piracy off the coast of Somalia even stronger and more coordinated and effective.

The resolution provides the necessary legal basis for the adoption of Operation Atalanta by the European Union, which is expected to begin shortly. It also provides clear indications and guidelines for Member States and organizations already operating in the area with their units, such as NATO.

As in past occasions, I wish to underline once again that piracy off the coast of Somalia is a consequence of the political, security and humanitarian crisis that has been taking place in Somalia for many years. In order to eliminate piracy, we have a responsibility to bring peace and stability to that country. We now see an opportunity for that. We hope that the meeting to be held in mid-December with the participation of several ministers can provide an opportunity to shift gears with regard to Somalia and to support current efforts at peace resolutely and effectively. We owe that to the civilian population of Somalia, which has suffered so much during more than 15 years of war and which is looking to the United Nations with great hope and confidence.

The President: There are no further speakers inscribed on my list. The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Council will remain seized of the matter.

The meeting rose at 11.40 a.m.